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EXPEDIENT

Towards the Eftablifhing of

A WORTHY BODY

O F

Parochial Refident Clergy

Throughout the whole Kingdom.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

*Honour the Priest, and give him his Portion; as it
is commanded.*

Ecclus. vii. 31.

*In all thy Gifts shew a chearful Countenance, and
dedicate thy Tithes with Gladness.*

— xxxv. 9.

LONDON, printed in the Year 1769.

This little Essay having been well spoken of on its late appearance in the London Magazine, it is hoped the design of it may be still further promoted, by its being humbly presented this way to some very worthy persons for that purpose.



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E X P E D I E N T

Towards the Establiſhing of

A W O R T H Y B O D Y

O F

Parochial Reſident Clergy

Throughout the whole Kingdom.

Kent, March 8, 1769.

S I R,

IT is ſaid, on very ſufficient authority, of Titus Veſpaſian, that having recollected at ſupper, that he had done *no good* to any man that day, he uttered this memorable apothegm—*Amici, diem perdidit!*--
A ſentence *every good* man will ſay,
A 2 with

with Mr. Echard, worthy of an *emperor*, and even of a *Christian*.

And a few reflections on so benevolent a disposition in so great a personage, could not but alarm a little---excite enquiries of the like sort ; and make one seek out for *ways* and *means* of doing *daily* all possible good in the world.

And amidst many others, those recommended to persons of quality and estate by *so excellent* a person as Mr. Nelson, made more than ordinary impressions on my mind.

He considers the *wants* of men under two distinct views---such as relate to their souls, and such as relate to their bodies. But as I would not aim, Sir, at engrossing too much of your time, I will only select *one* of the *first* sort--which will not be of any great length ; yet appear to be of the *utmost* consequence, and the *happy means* of promoting *most* of the *other good* designs, proposed by the
worthy

worthy gentleman I have mentioned. His goodness, zeal, and *constant* endeavour to serve, and advance the interest of religion, are well known in the world---*His name will live for ever.*

And next to his *first* grand concern for promoting the honour and glory of God, the subjects chosen by him for the *ember fasts*, will abundantly shew his solicitude and ardour to *re-*
trieve the respect *due* to the *stewards*
of the mysteries of God. And how worthily does he observe that *all na-*
tions, whether learned or ignorant, whether civil or barbarous, have agreed in *this*, as a common dictate of natural reason, to express their reverence for the Deity, and their affections to religion, by conferring extraordinary privileges of honour upon *such* as *administer* in holy things, and by providing *liberally* for their maintenance. He shewed himself thoroughly sensible of the great importance of

such regard for the clergy, and spared no pains in recommending and pressing for an honourable and plentiful maintenance----*such* as would bear some proportion to the dignity of their office. He heartily wished and longed to see every parochial minister *repossessed* (under proper and necessary conditions) of what (in the words of an excellent man) *he might claim as his own*—The ancient patrimony of his church, with all its rights and emoluments, that his parish had been so notoriously robbed of by the *Pope of Rome* and *his* agents.

He might by this means *make full proof of his ministry*---be able, as well as ready, to distribute, and willing to communicate---and be an *example* to the believers in *charity*, and every good work.

But Mr. Nelson's sentiments on *this* subject will appear to much greater advantage in his *own* words, and therefore I will readily transcribe
what

what he says relating to the *governors of the bounty of Queen Anne* for the better maintenance of the poor clergy, he so heartily desired. He makes the great design of *this* bounty one of his ways and means of doing good to the souls of men ; and shews *how* it may become so in the best manner possible.

“ This corporation (he observes) is now made a *fund* for increasing the *maintenance* of the poor clergy ; which is of very great importance towards the promoting of *religion* in the nation. For as long as the provision for the clergy is mean and inconsiderable, it is not likely that parents will dedicate their children of the *best* parts to the service of the altar ; nor is it reasonable, they should bestow expensive education upon their children, to place them in a *station* that will hardly afford them *subsistence*. Neither can it be expected that small livings can be otherwise supplied than

by men of *low parts*—of mean education ; and of very indifferent characters, as to their moral accomplishments. This makes *pluralities necessary*, and reduces the clergy to *such* contempt, that their labours have *no* influence upon the minds of men, except it be *those* very few, that are able to distinguish their *characters* from their *circumstances* .

It is to be wished, therefore, that we might enjoy those quiet times, when our governors, instead of racking their heads in the pursuit of their several schemes of government, might have their minds *wholly* engaged to *propose such means*, as might make the church of God *shine* with the *greatest lustre*--among which it is evident that a tax to *purchase* the *tithes* from the *impropriators*, and *restore* them to the church,

church, would be of the greatest consequence.

This would prevent the *progress* of popery and schism. And the body of the nation have no reason to object against it; for, as the generality will be better provided for in the great concerns of their souls; so they will thereby open a *larger* prospect for the provision of the *younger sons* of the gentry; who would come in for a share in the advantages of it. So that by purchasing the tithes, gentlemen provide for their *families*, as well as for the *welfare* of the *church*. Many other happy regulations might be made upon such a *blessed* conjuncture, as would very much tend to the glory of God; and good of souls."

This *lay-gentleman's* love, so eminently shewn for the *gates of Zion*, cannot pass without making great impressions on *serious* minds--its flames must penetrate, and warm the breasts of its governors in the glorious pursuit

suit of a work, so *momentous* in the article of religion, and recommended with so many (one would think quite irresistible) arguments. The fathers of the *church* are always ready to serve the *state*---and the *state* cannot but be on *all important* occasions as well disposed to promote the interests of the *church*.

It should be the *grand* concern of the *state* to do so, according to the memorable observation of a celebrated prelate of the last century---who says---“ Kings and states, when they appear to have been remarkably protected (as it *often* happens) by the hand of God, and delivered from great dangers, may understand *what blessing* they have by a *church* planted in their *state*.

The *church* bringeth the blessing to the *state*; because God regardeth *them* that are faithful to *him*; and for *their* sake bleisseth the *whole*.”

Mr.

Mr. Nelson proposes the raising of a *tax* towards purchasing the tithes of impropriators ; but there will be little or no necessity for this measure. The savings in hand from the fund of the first fruits and tenths, and the *annual* produce of it, with the aid and concurrence of well-wishers to the plan, will be very sufficient to compass the noble design---and in no huge length of time *.

The respectable list of benefactors to the *augmentations*, as *now* made, may be found in Mr. Ecton's book on the subject ; and will give pleasure to the curious enquirer---but *what numbers* may be expected on this much *greater* and more *extensive* scheme---of discharging the *debt* (Lord Bacon makes *due*) to the church---by restoring to it ^{her} ancient patrimony---her endowments, tithes, and *all* her rights
---as

* I presume this fund may be capable of doing much greater service ; and that the reasons for its being applied this way are even stronger now than when Mr. Nelson wrote his address.

...as also of removing the *scandal* of its continuing so long *unpaid*—and what Mr. Lambard in his celebrated book, *Perambulation of Kent*, so warmly complains of. “An *appropriation*, says he, is *one*, among many, of those monstrous births of covetousness, begotten by the *man of Rome*, in the *dark* night of superstition ; and yet *suffered* to live in this *day-light* of the gospel, to the hindrance of learning, the impoverishment of the ministry, and the *infamy* of our profession.”

The Rev. Dr. Burton, in his excellent *Commentariolus*, intimates to us, and gives the strongest and most moving reasons for it also, that the late archbishop of Canterbury was a well-wisher to some such reformation in the church, and had it greatly at his heart ; which makes me more particularly honour his memory, and look upon his grace as the CERVUS AD FONTES AQUARUM ANHELANS. And *this very desire* must yield *some* pleasure to
every

every man, who has any true regard for the *religion* of his country. It may be fairly presumed, that *many other* learned and good prelates may have the *very same* concern with Dr. Secker for repairing the breaches, and building up the walls of Jerusalem; and then one would hope, that the *fortitudo christiana* might in some favourable time put the *prudentia civilis*, the Doctor afterwards speaks of, as near as may be out of the *important* question.

Dr. Burton's *own* words on the occasion may be expected——and they are——*Sed nec illud prætereundum reor, in quo cernitur vera animi magnitudo, cleri inferioris, cujus ministerio ut plurimum res ecclesiastica transigitur, curam plane paternam. Cupiit quidem ille, quoad temporum iniquitas patiebatur omnia in ordinem pristinum revocari.*

His Grace must be well apprized that the *additions* made to small liv-
ings

ings by the *present* application of the royal bounty (though under the *best* management it is capable of) cannot be supposed to be of any *very material* signification with respect to the *grand considerations*, that offer themselves so naturally to our view on the subject before us—I mean towards *supporting* the *character*, the *office*, and *family* of a parish-priest, in the *way* and *manner* as ought to be *agreeable* to the honour and dignity of his function. But by the *other* proposal, the excellent and noble designs of *founders*, with regard to *residence*, &c. would be all most happily revived. The church would be seen as coming afresh out of their hands with all its endowments, privileges, and emoluments, fully and perfectly ; and the plan fraught with every blessing that could be desired.

And surely you will wish with your sincere friend and say——*fiat ! fiat !*

R. C.

A

Solemn and moving Form

Made Use of by

A PIOUS LADY

In giving in

Her Improprate Tithes to the
Church.

AS an earnest, and pledge of the total resignation of herself and hers to thy service, vouchsafe, O Lord, to receive to the use of thy church, this small portion of that large estate which thou hast bestowed upon her, the unworthiest of thy servants.

Re-

Redeem thy right, whereof thou hast been too long disseized by the world, both in the possessions, and in the person of thy handmaid. And let thy outward seifure of earth be accompanied with an inward surrendry of the heart and spirit into thy own hands ; so that the *restorer*, as well as that which is *restored*, may become, and be confirmed thine inheritance.

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